

REMARKS

The present Response is being filed under a Certificate of Mailing as indicated. Claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 15, 18-19 and 23 remain pending. Claims 1, 10, 18 and 23 have been amended. Claims 3-6, 8-9, 12-14, 16-17, 20-22 have been withdrawn. Claim 24 has been cancelled.

35 USC §102

Claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 11 and 15 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,471,756 ("Bolanos"). Independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to recite that the contact area has an outer periphery, "that has a circumference," and that "the relief area is recessed from the outer periphery of the contact area, such that the relief area interrupts the outer periphery of the contact area, and the relief area does not extend around the entire circumference of the outer periphery." The Office Action states that the substantially cylindrical portion 142 corresponds to the contact area of the presently claimed invention and the frustoconical joining region 144 corresponds to the relief area. It then proceeds to state that the frustoconical joining region 144 can be divided in half, with one half being a relief area and another half a handling area. The Applicant is not quite clear what is meant by this. There is no structural division between the two halves of the frustoconical joining region 144, so it is not at all clear how half could be a relief while the other half is something else (even though it is just a continuation of the relief)? However, while the Applicants disagree with characterization of the frustoconical joining region, independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended further to recite that the relief area is bounded by the outer periphery of the contact area on at least three sides. Even if the "relief area" of Bolanos is just half of the frustoconical joining region 144, it is not bounded on at least three sides by the outer periphery of the contact area. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 1, 10, and their dependents are believed to be allowable.

35 USC §103

Claims 18, 19, 23 and 24 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,314,493 ("Mikhail") in view of Bolanos. Independent claims 18 and 23 also include the limitations that the contact areas include an outer periphery, having a circumference, and that the relief area is recessed from the outer periphery of the contact area, such that the relief area interrupts the outer periphery of the contact area, and that the relief area does not extend

the entire circumference of the outer periphery. Claims 18 and 23 also include the limitation that the relief area is bounded by the outer periphery of the contact area on at least three sides. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, Bolanos does not disclose this limitation. Also, Mikhail does not disclose such features either. Therefore, claims 18, 23 and their dependents are believed to be allowable.

Conclusion

For the above-described reasons it is respectfully submitted that the rejections to the claims have been overcome and that all remaining claims, namely claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 15, 18-19 and 23, are currently in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia K. Barnett
/Cynthia K. Barnett/
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 48,655

Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933-7003
(574) 372-7332
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